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ABSTRACT

This issue contains the second of a two-part feature about European community school centers. The principal difference between the European and the American community school movements is that in almost all European nations the federal government supports them and takes an active part in their development. The article focuses on the forms of facilities and their administrative organization in Sweden and France. In Sweden most new developments are designed around small town centers. An example is given of a town center that contains a high school, medical center, sports hall, library, restaurant, and a complex of shops and stores with adjacent residential sections. The library, gymnasium, assembly hall, and medical center were designed to serve school and community simultaneously. In another Swedish town, community and school facilities are integrated into housing developments. The schools can be converted into housing when the need for primary schools begins to decline. The Kulturhuset is an expanded library, art gallery, and municipal services center built in the middle of Stockholm. In France new town projects have community facilities grouped around or close to a shopping center. The buildings and their programs are designed for intergenerational use according to the activity rather than according to the age or social characteristics of the users. (Author/MLF)

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EFL Reports...

September 1978 No. 29

Planning and managing the physical environment of public institutions

ED162431

European community schools—continued

This issue contains the second of a two-part feature written by Larry Molloy, an EFL vice president, about European community school centers. Molloy visited several European countries when he represented the United States at conferences in Stockholm and Athens on community schools that were convened by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Union of International Architects.

Currently, EFL is engaged in a research and information program on community school centers that is supported by the Charles S. Mott Foundation. These two special issues of *EFL Reports...* are part of that program. We will publish in October the first of six booklets on U.S. community school centers. The series will cover planning, management, financing, facilities, and conversions. Copies will be available free from EFL, 850 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

Sweden puts social services into the center of new towns

During the late 1960s, the Swedish federal government convened a series of State Commissions of Enquiry to study national policies on housing, education, recreation, and cultural activities. One result of these studies was the adoption of the "total view" planning policy in which all public buildings must be designed to serve different constituencies of local citizens at different times of the day. Consequently, every public building is viewed as a community center and houses programs to meet the needs of its neighborhood.

Since Sweden's population is growing through immigration, most innovations in community planning occur in new facilities related to new towns or planned urban developments. Most new developments are designed around small town centers, so it is not unusual to find community schools, medical centers, recreation facilities, and expanded resource libraries built into shopping centers. Very often they are contiguous buildings integrated into a shopping mall. Unlike the British community school complexes, the Swedish community schools, particularly the primary schools, tend to be small and directly related to adjacent housing

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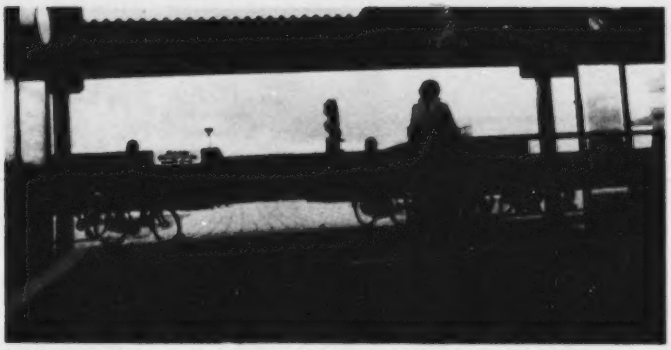
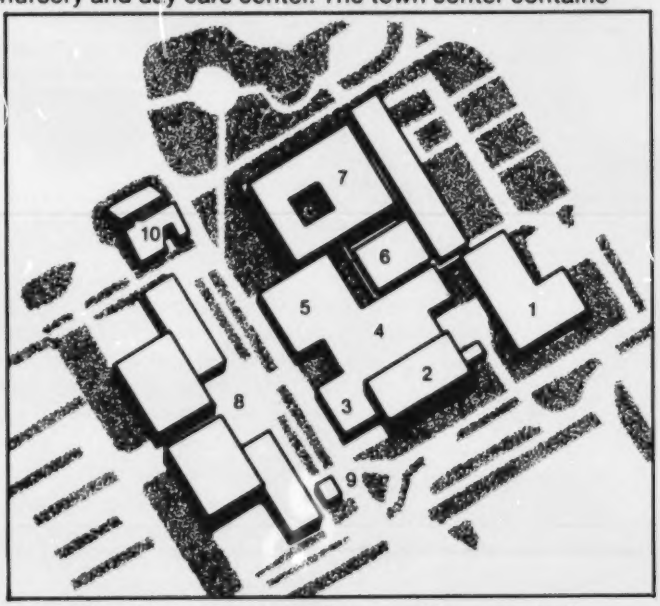


Entrance to school and library opens directly off the shopping center

facilities. All new schools contain facilities that serve local residents of all ages at different times of the day.

The Backby district new town, northwest of Stockholm, is a good example of typical Swedish integrated facilities planning in new developments. The district consists of detached and terraced houses as well as two-and three-story apartment buildings loosely divided into four quadrants surrounding a town center shopping mall. Each quadrant is served by a combined primary and middle school that also houses a small nursery and day care center. The town center contains



1 Medical center
2 Sports hall
3 Leisure time center
4 Restaurant
5 Library
6 Assembly hall
7 Senior stage school
8 Shopping center
9 Newspaper stand
10 Church

the Backby high school, medical center, sports hall, library, and restaurant on the east, and a complex of shops and stores on the west. All public services occur within a pedestrian "green passage" of malls, meadows, and playing fields that divides the two adjacent residential sections.

Whether library, restaurant, or high school, the spaces tend to flow indistinguishably from one to another via public corridors in which adults mingle freely with students on their way to classes. The library, gymnasium, assembly hall, and medical center were designed to serve school and community simultaneously, therefore they contain more facilities and services than separate public buildings. As a result, adults are increasing their daytime use of community services and public satisfaction is reportedly high.

When asked how the Backby plan is working, Len-

Public circulation within the shopping center flows past a cafe and the school reception desk

nart Orehag, district superintendent, replied that, "The facilities meet the national goal to reduce the capital and operating costs of public facilities. We also prove that, when given the opportunity, different generations can enjoy integrated public services at the same time. We hear few complaints, experience no vandalism, and run on a lower budget than conventional school districts." Write to Lennart Orehag, Skoldirector, Bostadadress, Ormbergssvangen 15724, 62 Vasteras, Sweden.

School centers designed for conversion into low cost housing

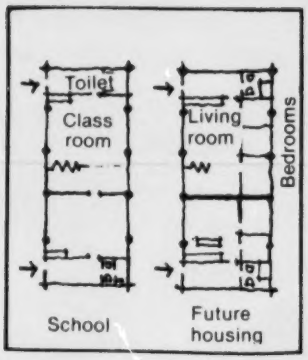
Although Sweden's population is growing and student enrollment swelling, school planners must still deal with variations in demography. Upplands-Vasby, for example, is a rapidly growing municipality 25 kilometers north of Stockholm. Because of the new international airport and a connecting expressway making commuting convenient, the city's 13,000 inhabitants doubled in 10 years. In addition, a wave of young families and immigrants created a population mix in which 22% are under age 10.

In order to cope with rapid housing increases, the city organized a municipal housing foundation called Vasbyhem to plan and construct residential facilities that would meet housing shortages as well as provide community services. In recent years, many outlying municipalities in Sweden have established housing enterprises owned by the city and primarily engaged in building (through independent contractors) and administering dwellings built in response to critical housing shortages. Since the new residential areas in Upplands-Vasby were associated with an existing city, Vasbyhem decided to integrate community and school facilities into housing developments rather than into new shopping centers. The schools were designed to be converted into housing when the need for primary schools begins to decline. The integrated community facilities, however, were designed to serve a rapidly aging population during the life of the building.

The Vasbyhem Foundation set three primary objectives for the design of its school and community facilities:

- ☐ The buildings are to be highly integrated with the dwellings in order to enrich the social environment.
- ☐ The service units, particularly schools, are to be broken down into smaller units to avoid extremely large numbers of children being gathered in one place.
- ☐ The school centers are to be suitable for conversion to dwellings when the need for their original function diminishes in the future.

The first schools designed to convert into housing



were constructed in a neighborhood called Ekebo in 1973. Three long low buildings contained large classrooms, each adjacent to a foyer/coat room and a toilet. The classrooms can later be converted at low cost into two-and three-bedroom apartments. Classrooms are grouped around a community services center containing the permanent facilities designed to serve a changing community. These facilities include a cafe, dining room, assembly hall/theater, gymnasium, tennis courts, laundry, handicraft and hobby rooms, and changing rooms with lockers that are also used for the adjacent outdoor ball diamond, track, and a swimming pool that is covered during the winter.

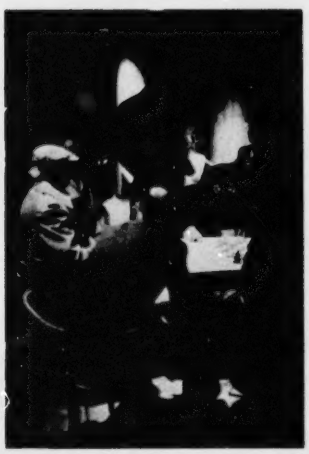
The classroom buildings are flexible because they

Senior citizens, adults, and children eat in the same lunchroom

have no interior supports so that partitions can easily be moved without structural changes. All piping and ductwork is contained in the exterior walls and ceilings. Similar construction is used in classroom buildings in another Vasby neighborhood called Grimstaby. But in order to improve housing marketability in the future, the Grimstaby buildings look more like homes than the barrack-type buildings in Ekebo.

For information about Swedish policy on integrating school facilities, write to Ingemar Mattsson, Rektor, Board of Education, Ekeby-Vagen 24, S-18262, Djursholm, Sweden.

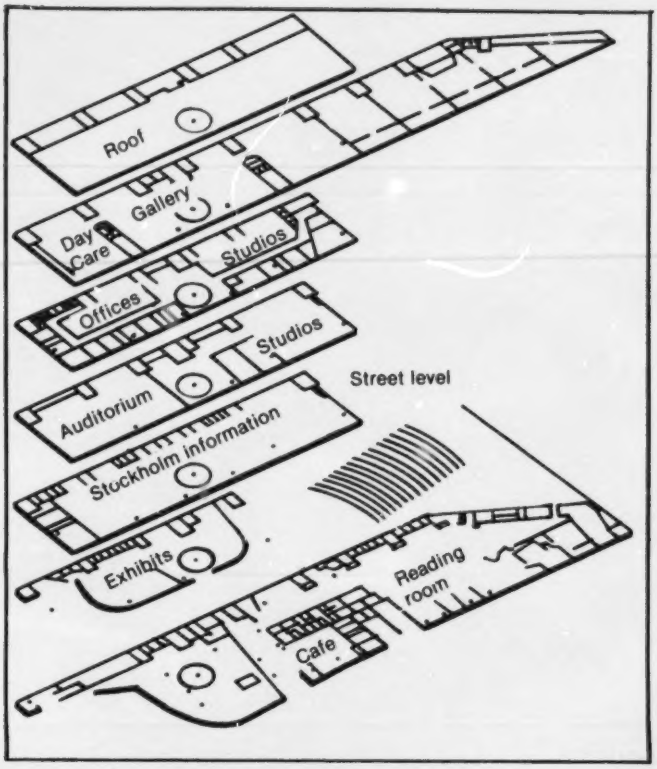
Cultural community center built in the middle of Stockholm



Kulturhuset, a new concept in cultural/community service centers, is one of the liveliest multi-service facilities in Sweden. The first Kulturhuset opened in Stockholm adjacent to the Swedish Parliament building in 1974. The facility has been so successful that many other cities in Sweden are planning similar Kulturhusets.

Primarily, Kulturhuset is an expanded library, art gallery, and municipal services center. The building was designed to showcase Swedish culture and lifestyles, to serve shoppers and residents in Stockholm's downtown area, to provide services and adult education to a burgeoning population of southern Mediterranean immigrants, to increase recreational and cultural activities, and in general to improve the quality of life for residents, commuters, and shoppers.

Thus, Kulturhuset is a one-stop community services center where visitors may leave children, browse through the library, read newspapers and books from foreign (southern Mediterranean) countries, watch TV or educational videotapes, choose among an array of exhibitions, films, and displays, eat at four restaurants, listen to debates on current issues, play chess, write a paper, pur-



Browsing and viewing room is located next to library (top), and snack bar (bottom) is positioned close to reading areas

chase theater tickets, obtain city maps or application forms for government services, rent space for a community activity, or even design a work that can be displayed for sale in an adjacent art gallery. The building, however, was designed for maximum flexibility so that new services could be slipped in when needed or requested by the communtiy. Write to Culture Board of Sweden, Kulturforvaltning, Hantverkargatan 5, S-11221, Stockholm, Sweden.

France aims to open all schools to their communities

The school as a community service center is a relatively recent phenomenon in France. The Prime Minister established an Inter-ministerial Committee on Integrated Facilities in 1970 as recommended by the fifth federal plan—a 5-year study of social, financial, educational, and cultural trends in France. The fifth plan recommended that all existing schools should aim toward opening their programs and facilities to the community. When planning new schools, however, and especially those schools related to the national program of new town construction, the plan conceives the community schools as poles of "urban animation"—nerve centers of social, cultural, and educational services designed to vitalize or revitalize the urban core.

In general, the federal government's fifth plan commitment to community schools was related to two existing movements: the tendency of small schools to open their doors to the community, and the national program for new town development. Projects developed out of the trend to open school doors led to the creation of facilities on a smaller scale than the new town projects. They are socio-cultural in character, the more modest ones are integrated with primary or nursery school ("maisons de l'enfance"), while facilities at the district level are usually integrated with a lower secondary school ("college d'enseignement secondaire" or CES), such as the Centres educatifs et culturels at Yerres and Istres.

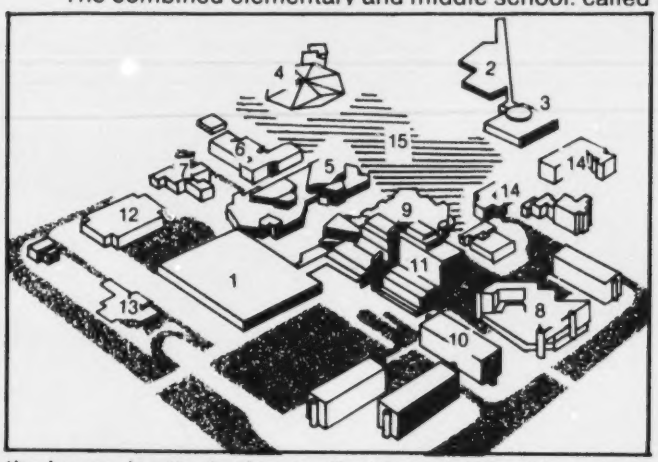
The new town projects are large (20,000 to 30,000 square meters) and have community facilities grouped around or close to a shopping center. A peculiarly French characteristic of these projects is that the buildings and their programs are designed for intergenerational use according to the activity rather than according to the age or social characteristics of the users. Consequently, new school buildings are designed to serve all age levels at different times of the day. They usually contain no libraries, cafeterias, or recreational or arts facilities. Instead, a freestanding library, usually near a cluster of school buildings, is designed to serve the community, the schools, and the nearby commercial and governmental centers. Recreation activities are provided to all in a "salle omnisport," the well equipped fieldhouse normally surrounded by parks, lakes, and playing fields. Counseling, guidance, nursing, psychiatric, and health services occur in the "centre de sante." The need for facilities housing cultural activities, restaurants and cafeterias, student activities, clubrooms, studios, theaters, and assembly areas is satisfied in a uniquely French invention called "La Maison pour Tous," or the house for everyone.

French "Maisons" contain a wide array of services

The nearly completed new town, St. Quentin-en-Yvelines, near Versailles, is the pinnacle of French integrated services/community school planning. The pedestrians-only downtown core contains all the necessities for urban living and working within 5 square blocks: schools, offices, nurseries, commercial center, merchandising gallery, lake, parks, police station, cultural center, information center, community center for young workers, senior

citizen center and, of course, the salle omnisport, centre de sante, community/school library and documentation center, and La Maison pour Tous.

The combined elementary and middle school, called



1 Shopping center
2 Lycee
3 Maison de la Formation
4 Salle omnisport
5 Maison pour Tous
6 Center for senior citizens and young workers
7 Centre de sante
8 Cultural center
9 Community/school library
10 Administration
11 Stores and offices
12 Police
13 Service station
14 Housing
15 Park

the Lycee, is attached to another French invention called "Maison de la Formation" which contains classes for adult education, language labs, and workshops. The principal distinction between the Lycee and the Maison de la Formation (both considered school buildings housing scholastic activities) is that the Maison is designed for groups of various ages all served by the municipal school system, while the Lycee is principally for elementary pupils though it may be used after hours for scholastic activities when needed.

La Maison pour Tous is a new concept of a community activities center in French town planning. Besides St. Quentin-en-Yvelines there are Maisons incorporated into the Les Roches and Yerres new towns. La Maison most often contains cultural, social, leisure and recreational facilities (club rooms, studios, assemblies, theaters, discotheques, and workshops) for the social and educational activities of a wide variety of users. There are also restaurants, galleries, cafeterias, and browsing rooms that are used jointly by school and community groups.

Whereas La Maison contains facilities that may be used by the Lycee, the Lycee does not have facilities that can be used by community groups from La Maison. Nor are there examples where the two institutions join physically or administratively. But in some new towns there is evidence that the community school facility and La Maison often compete for constituencies and service providers.

Integrated services in south of France include vacations

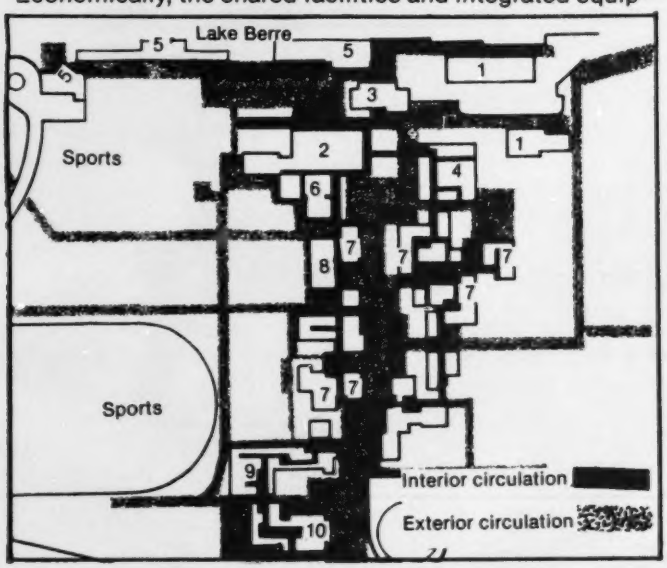
New towns, however, are not the only integrated service centers following the French concept of social-cultural activities planning. A Maison pour Tous, for exampie, is also included in an integrated services center built by the town of Istres, northwest of Marseille. The project, called the Istres Educative and Cultural Center, was designed to link the center city with the large industrial plants and harbor areas to the south. Consequently, the Istres center is located one kilometer southeast of the old town on a cliff overlooking Berre Lake.

Center facilities are grouped around two intersec-

ting axes: one very near and parallel to the cliff, and the other perpendicular axis traveling west toward an area that the city expects will be developed for housing as a result of the new services center. The busiest facilities (amusement halls, restaurants, swimming pool, and gymnasium) are located where the axes cross. Surrounding these are the cultural and educational clusters linked by service centers (libraries, medical centers, maisons pour Tous, and administration facilities) that serve all agencies. The school facilities include a lower secondary school, primary school, a school of music, nursery (connected with the cultural studio/workshop facility called "salle d'Animation Culturelle") and a university extension center. Facing the lake, with access to the beach, the Istres center also includes a vacation center for tourists called "Maison Familiale de Vacances." This is a cottage-like hotel for visiting families who are also attracted to the recreational, educational, and cultural activities in the overall center. Interestingly, the Maison Familiale de Vacances is a joint project of the federal government and municipal departments of two cities.

The Istres Educative and Cultural Center is administered by an amalgamation of 15 agencies, each with its own structure and management procedures. Their administrative relationship is defined in a management agreement negotiated between, the regional prefet (commissioner) representing the federal government and the president of a community development syndicate representing the local authorities. An administrative committee with representatives from all 15 agencies and chaired by the regional prefet controls the Istres center administration. The federal government appoints the overall manager who coordinates the needs and activities of the local agencies. The university bursar acts as the center's treasurer and administers funds that support the shared services.

Completed in 1976, the Istres Educative and Cultural Center has since experienced both success and failure. Architecturally, the low-rise openness of the buildings permitted the users of the facilities to settle in rapidly. Economically, the shared facilities and integrated equip-



1 Pools
2 Gyms
3 Restaurants
4 Salle d'Animation Culturelle
5 Vacation village
6 Maison pour Tous
7 Community school
8 Secondary school
9 Administration
10 Reception, health, guidance, and employment

ment and service operation reduced both the center's capital costs and its operating budget. Some of these savings, however, were offset by the relatively high cost of the lengthy study and planning period. Operationally, the center was an instant success with children and adolescents but adults were slow to take part in the activities. This was partly due to the lack of community input during the planning process, and partly due to constructing the educational buildings first, thus misrepresenting the center's image as child-centered service. Adults, however, began to take part later when the library and recreation centers were constructed.

For information about educational programs in relation to national trends, write to Jacques Treffel, Inspecteur General Publique, Ministere de l'Education, 110 rue de Grenelle, Paris (7eme), France. For comparative studies of the differences between the various French community schools, write to Samir Abdulak, 119 Rue Lecourbe, 75015, Paris, France.

Europeans differ in approaches to community centers

The reason *EFL Reports*...has focused on European community schools is to collect insights and expertise that will benefit American community school planners. We studied Europe because most of the countries are modern industrialized democracies like ours, but nevertheless there are wide differences among the national approaches to community schools. The United States, for example, is known for its advances in user-participation (community input) in community school design and planning. Britain tends to insert community services into school buildings. West Germany leans toward technological advances in facility design. Holland orients community services and educational programs toward neighborhood recreational centers. Sweden eclectically tailors community services to local needs and constructs a building around the aggregation. France engages in social engineering by putting people of all ages and backgrounds into facilities designed for a specific activity. Obviously, these alternative approaches for providing community services would not suit all circumstances, but community school planners should at least consider them.

How central governments affect community services

The principal difference between the European and the American community school movements is that in almost all European nations, the federal government supports them and takes an active part in their development. In Britain, the Department of Education and Science provides direct consulting and professional services. In West Germany, the state builds model facilities. In Sweden, government-conducted commissions of enquiry produced a national planning policy. Similarly, the French government conducted a planning study and subsequently followed through with funds for the construction of new buildings, and, in some cases, provided permanent staff for administration.

One benefit of federal intervention is the joint school and community library—much more common in Europe than in the United States. One explanation is that many European countries exert some federal control

over public libraries; thus the territorial battles between school and public libraries rarely occur.

Falling enrollments will make European schools available for conversion to community uses

European planners agree that community schools cost less than building discrete facilities, operate more cheaply, conserve energy, and respond flexibly to changing community needs. They warn, however, that coordinated facilities take longer to plan and involve more people in the process. The costs for the extra time should be considered in the overall budget.

Although the schools discussed in this report are often large complexes of buildings and facilities, the great wave of building community school complexes has passed. Every European nation except Sweden is facing plummeting birthrates and pupil shortages. Consequently, the double blow of declining enrollments and a general shortage of capital funds has rerouted community school programs from new complexes into surplus space. Apparently, the declining enrollments phenomenon occurs at different times in different nations, but is almost sure to happen in the industrialized democracies. The shift from community school complexes to surplus space occurred first in the United States about 1974, appeared later in Britain in 1976, and is troubling France today. Because of substantial immigration, Sweden, however, seems to have temporarily escaped the problem. Nevertheless, the major centers of coordinated facilities planning, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, are re-evaluating the community school movement in light of the declining enrollment phenomenon.

The Programme on Educational Building, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2 rue Andre-Pascal, 75775 Paris, France, has a series of reports on community schools in many nations and summary reports on worldwide movements. Write to the Programme for further information.

Declining enrollment: slide presentation available from EFL

We know from the current population of small children that in 10 years time there will be about 20 percent fewer youngsters in high schools, and this will cause problems in some districts. However, there is sufficient lead time to make plans to minimize the crisis and even turn the declining enrollment into an opportunity for improving secondary education.

EFL has a slide and script presentation on "Enrollment Decline and the High School: Crisis or Opportunity?" that describes the issues and reviews the options and opportunities.

- The demography is clear through the late 1980s, but from there on it needs careful watching.
- Planning options include improving the conditions for traditional high school students, expanding educational opportunities beyond high school students, and putting community services into the high school.
- Planning must also reach for creative solutions to staffing, finance, governance, and legal issues.

The presentation has 134 slides, a script, and forms for participants to rate their own district's options. It takes about 1½ hours and should be followed by group

discussions. Members of the EFL staff who have made the presentation observed that:

- Most communities have neither begun to plan nor have a planning process to cope with high school enrollment decline.
- Many of the options have been preempted by coping with elementary school decline (e.g., reuse for daycare, senior citizens, arts programs, etc.), and by programs initiated by local community colleges, technical institutes, and four-year colleges (e.g., adult and vocational education, job retraining, etc.). Thus the high school is caught in a squeeze.
- Many good ideas are too quickly dismissed because of money, especially with the specter of California's Proposition 13. Creative solutions are possible through sharing programs, staff, facilities, and funding with other public agencies.
- Because the majority of school districts have only one high school, various forms of parallel and joint use must be considered, even if legal and governance arrangements have to be changed.
- High schools may lose the important position they have played in most communities unless they start broad-based planning. Planning is defined as the efficient use of resources to meet established goals and objectives.

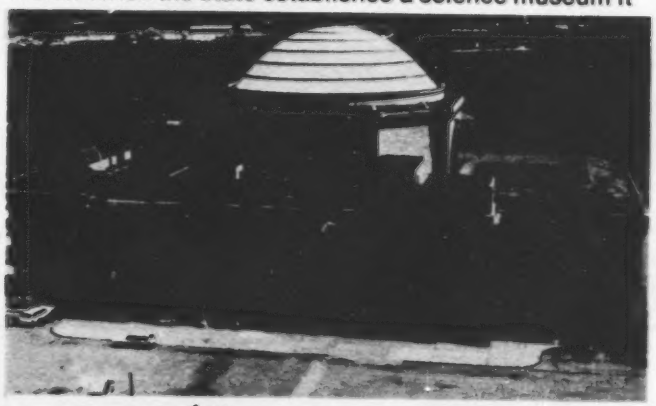
We would like to offer an unsolicited endorsement from a school principal in Michigan. "The reaction of citizens and educators to [the presentation] has alleviated much of our depression and has stimulated a great amount of planning and discussion, some realistic and some wishful thinking, but nearly all with a positive approach for better education in our schools."

"Enrollment Decline and the High School: Crisis or Opportunity?" is available for a one-week rental for $75. The package includes slides, script, and up to 25 copies of the "Rating of the Options" forms. For more information write to EFL or phone Margaret Nyhus 212-751-6214.

Copies of two EFL publications are available for $4.00 each prepaid: *The Secondary School: Reduction, Renewal, and Real Estate* and *Surplus School Space: Options and Opportunities.*

Kids encouraged to touch museum exhibits in former railroad station

Richmond, Virginia stands at the confluence of two streams of EFL interest: reusing railroad stations, and museums that allow children to participate with the exhibits. When the state established a science museum it



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bought the empty railroad station to house it. At present, the museum operates a Discovery Room in 6,000 sq ft of what was once one of the waiting rooms, but later this year work will begin on renovating the remainder of the building. It needs a new roof and a great deal of caulking to prevent the structure from deteriorating. Later, the museum will build a planetarium adjacent to the station.

The present Discovery Room contains more than 40 hands-on exhibits designed to stimulate children's interest in science. The room is fully accessible to disabled visitors; for instance, the rocks and minerals are identified in braille.

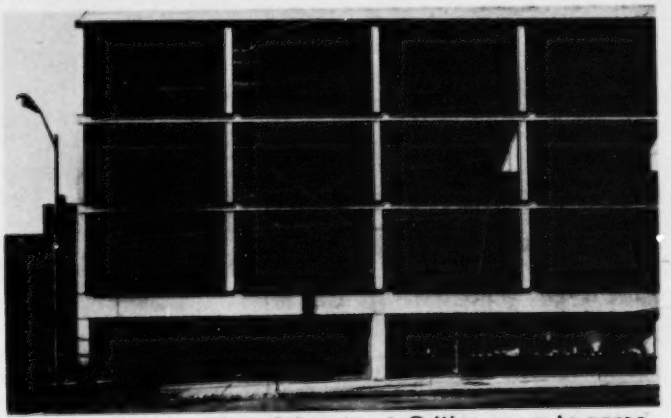
Programs are arranged to supplement the science curriculum of school grades 5, 6, and 7. The staff puts a lot of emphasis on motivating the kids to interact with the exhibits and not just look at them.

For information write to Paul H. Knappenberger, Director, The Science Museum of Virginia, 2500 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23220.

Gown meets town on property taxes

When Yale set out to build yet another museum it faced two groups making different demands about the proposed building, but fortunately for the university, one design solution satisfied both groups. The city of New Haven required that the site of the museum remain on the tax rolls, and students wanted to maintain the vitality of street life that was in danger of disappearing if an institutional building occupied the site.

The successful design solution for the Yale Center for British Art included stores at street level on two sides of the museum. The stores pay property taxes and attract



people to that section of the street. Critics seem to agree that the dignity of the building's exterior has not been jeopardized by the commercial arcade, and local people expressed pleasure at the arrangement. Other cities should consider this development since on streets where institutional buildings have to be sited close to the sidewalk, the monumental scale of the wall is often inhospitable to people passing by. And who can resist the prospect of tax revenues?

Educational Facilities Laboratories is a nonprofit organization established in 1958 by the Ford Foundation to encourage and guide constructive changes in educational and related facilities.

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